REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **2 May 2006**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9-12, 14, and 16. Claims 1-4, 9, 11-12, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hill et al (USPN 6,360,539, hereinafter "Hill"). Claims 6 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill, in view of Ross (USPN 6,396,382, hereinafter "Ross"). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill, in view of Ross, and further in view of Sinclair (USPN 6,804,959, hereinafter "Sinclair"). Claim 10 was not given patentable weight.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-4, 9, 11-12, and 16 were rejected as being anticipated by Hill. Claims 6 and 14 were rejected as being unpatentable over Hill, in view of Ross, and Claim 7 was rejected as being unpatentable over Hill in view of Ross, and further in view of Sinclair.

Applicant respectfully points out that the present invention results in a microrelay in which the contact head sidewall and signal lines are covered with a layer of sputtered gold such that there is no sputtered gold between the contact head sidewall and the signal lines. This is beneficial because there is no unwanted gold in the area between the contact head sidewall and the signal lines, and this prevents a short circuit between the contact head and the signal lines (see FIG. 3C and paragraph [0040]). The Applicant concurs with the examiner that the use of gold on micro-electric contacts is well-established, but respectfully points out that the present invention teaches the use of **sputtered** gold. This is advantageous because **sputtered gold is known to have higher hardness which results in less surface damage for metallic micro-contacts** (see paragraph [0036]). There is nothing in Hill, either explicit or implicit, to suggest the use of sputtered gold.

Furthermore, there is nothing within Hill, either explicit or implicit, which suggests performing a partial release operation to ensure the separation of sputtered gold on the contact head sidewall and the signal lines. Note that the process of sputtering gold may create a short circuit between the contact head and the signal lines. To remedy this potential problem, the present invention performs a partial release operation to ensure that no unwanted gold is deposited between the contact sidewall and the signal lines.

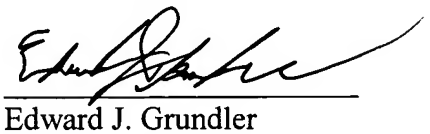
Accordingly, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 12 to clarify that the present invention results in a microrelay in which the contact head sidewall and signal lines are covered with a layer of sputtered gold so that there is no unwanted sputtered gold in the region between the contact head sidewall and the signal lines. These amendments find support in FIG. 3C and in paragraphs [0036] and [0040] of the instant application.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 12 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-4, 6-7, and 9-11, which depend upon claim 1, and claims 14 and 16, which depend upon claim 12, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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